Mr. Bruce

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: January 7, 1953

SUBJECT: Yugoslav Affairs

PARTICIPANTS: Mr. Vladimir Popovic, Yugoslav Ambassador,
Dr. Mirko Bruner, First Secretary, Yugoslav Embassy,
Mr. David Bruce, Under Secretary of State,
Mr. Tighe Wood, Mutual Security Agency,
Mr. Walworth Barbour, Director, Office of Eastern European Affairs.

COPIES TO: S/S (2)
G - Mr. Matthews
C - Mr. Bohlen
EUR - Mr. Perkins
Mr. Bonbright
EE - Mr. Leverich
American Embassy, Belgrade.

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I informed the Yugoslav Ambassador that I had called him in to discuss the Yugoslav request for additional aid to cover the drought situation and other matters and that I would read to him a statement of certain views of this Government in that connection. While this statement should not be considered an official communication from the US Government, a copy of the text thereof would be made available to him for purposes of convenience. I noted that Ambassador Allen in Belgrade was to see Marshal Tito and talk to him along similar lines, although possibly not in identical language. I then read the text contained in Deptel 842 of January 5, as amended by Deptels 845 and 847 of January 6 to Belgrade.

Ambassador Popovic expressed appreciation of US consideration for the situation created by the drought and said that he did not wish to comment at this time on the magnitude of the problem. He referred to the general substance of the presentation, noting that, while the US did not impose political conditions in connection with the drought aid, the fact that various political issues were included in a single presentation together with the economic aid in fact appeared to constitute a measure of pressure and he would have thought it better to have separated the two matters, following, if we had wished, the announcement of economic assistance by a discussion of political affairs a few days later.

The Ambassador then turned to the specific issues mentioned in my presentation. In regard to Tito's recent speech, he said that Tito's remarks and motives had been misunderstood. Tito had not intended to exert pressure on the US or the West generally. On the contrary, Tito, conscious of the importance of Yugoslav-US

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and the Western relationships, had endeavored to emphasize the necessity for close political cooperation between Yugoslavia and the West. In regard to Italy, Ambassador Popovic continued that Yugoslavia was well aware of the issues between the two countries and is convinced of the importance of defense arrangements in Southeast Europe in the face of the threat of Soviet aggression. Without specifically mentioning Trieste, he said that Yugoslavia had made many offers to settle the problem, which had not been met by the Italians. Referring to the mention of Italy's membership in NATO, he felt that reference to Italy's NATO relationship in the context of this presentation risked arousing suspicions concerning the nature of NATO aims, which would be unhealthful in present circumstances. Yugoslavia, he said, is fully prepared to assume its responsibilities in regard to the defense of Southeastern Europe and is, in fact, working hard in that direction, actually limiting the amount of subsistence available to her people in an effort to divert resources to her defense establishment. He hoped that Yugoslavia could be regarded as an ally in our joint defense effort and would be treated as such in discussions involving political problems in the area. Yugoslavia continues to regard the best means of solution as direct negotiations with Italy and Tito has reaffirmed Yugoslavia's attitude to that effect, as reported in the press today.

In conclusion, the Ambassador inquired whether it would not be possible for Ambassador Allen in Belgrade not to make the presentation to Marshal Tito in the manner we had done here, but rather to separate the announcement of additional economic assistance and the discussion of political matters by several days. He was informed that Ambassador Allen was believed to be seeing Tito at approximately the same time as our conversation here and that while, as indicated above, he might not make an identical presentation, his remarks would closely parallel those I had read him.

In parting, I again said that this presentation was not being made the subject of an official communication to him or his Government but rather one for discussion between us and added that if he should wish to continue the discussion at a later date I would be glad to do so.

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